

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. Claims 44-48 are new. No claims have been canceled or amended. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on U.S. Patent no. 5,991,810 of Shapiro et al. ("Shapiro") in view of U.S. Patent no. 6,336,117 of Massarani ("Massarani"). The Examiner admits that Shapiro fails to disclose numerous elements of Applicant's claims (e.g., the recited user interface, rules database, rule evaluator, etc.). However, the Examiner cites Massarani as teaching such features and contends that it would be obvious to combine those teachings with those of Shapiro to achieve the claimed invention.

Applicants respectfully disagree. Neither Shapiro nor Massarani is even relevant to the present invention, as claimed, beyond the fact that they mention proxies and/or caches. The present invention, as claimed, relates to a technique of making routing (forwarding) decisions for requests received on a network. For example, claim 34 recites, "determining . . . a forwarding destination in a defined forwarding hierarchy, by applying a set of user-specified forwarding rules to the request; and forwarding the request according to the determined forwarding destination" (emphasis added). Applicant's other independent claims also recite features similar to this.

In contrast, both Shapiro and Massarani relate to access control (i.e., controlling access to content) and have nothing to do with controlling routing or, more specifically, forwarding of requests.

Shapiro discloses that a proxy cache passes a request from a client to an access control agent, which compares parameters in the request against an access control list. The proxy cache then either permits or denies access to the requested information based on the outcome of that comparison. Col. 2, lines 16-27. However, in contrast with the present invention, Shapiro provides no hint of any request forwarding decision, based on user-specified forwarding rules, much less determining a particular forwarding destination for a request based on such rules. In accordance with claim 34, for example, applying the forwarding rules yields a particular destination to which a request is to be forwarded.

Massarani discloses a database of filtering rules used for access control, not routing/request forwarding. Users are matched with a list of URLs, and the user is either allowed to visit a specified web site or not, based on the list. Col. 5, lines 10-24.

Furthermore, neither Shapiro nor Massarani contains any hint or suggestion to modify their teachings to apply to request routing.

The above remarks apply to all of Applicant's independent claims. Therefore, none of Applicant's claims are rendered obvious (or anticipated) by the cited references, either individually or in combination.

Dependent Claims

In view of the above remarks, a specific discussion of the dependent claims is considered to be unnecessary. Therefore, Applicants' silence regarding any dependent claim is not to be interpreted as agreement with, or acquiescence to, the rejection of such claim or as waiving any argument regarding that claim.

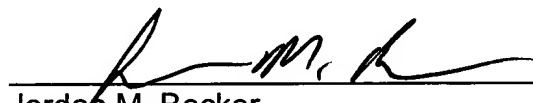
Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly requested.

If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,
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